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Saluting Employees

2014 TDCJ/CMIT criminal justice scholarships awarded

Sam Houston State University's (SHSU) College of Criminal Justice, in partnership with the Correctional Management Institute of Texas (CMIT), recently awarded the 2014 TDCJ/Correctional Management Institute of Texas scholarships to Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) employees Angela Chevalier and William Wheat. The intensive Master of Science (MS) degree program teaches criminal justice professionals critical management skills required to advance in the field of criminal corrections.

"This is a great opportunity for employees as they continue to expand their education and grow professionally in their criminal justice careers," said Patty Garcia, Human Resources Director at TDCJ.

Captain Chevalier of the Ramsey Academy in Region III in Rosharon hopes to train the next generation of criminal justice professionals after her retirement from TDCJ. Graduating from Sam Houston State University with an undergraduate degree, Chevalier pursued a career in corrections. She wanted to return to school to earn a Master's degree,

but her work schedule prevented regular classroom attendance. With a regular schedule at the training academy and her recently-awarded scholarship funding, she can now pursue her dream.



Captain Angela Chevalier

"If it were not for the scholarship, I couldn't continue my education," Chevalier said. "After completing my degree, I plan on teaching criminal justice at a college or university. The one thing that I want to impart is that our field will never go away and that there will always have to be leaders to show what lies ahead. We are the people who keep the world safe. There will always be a need for criminal justice and corrections professionals."

Chevalier has worked her way up through the ranks at TDCJ, beginning at the Wynne Unit in Huntsville in 2004 as a correctional officer. She began her supervisory career at the Terrell Unit and later served at the Darlington Unit in Rosharon and the Connally Unit in Kenedy, where she rose to the rank of captain. At the Region III Training Academy, she oversees the training of new officers as well as in-service and specialty training for officers and staff.

Captain Wheat began his 10-year TDCJ career at the Robertson Unit in Abilene and most recently worked as a captain of cor-



Captain William Wheat

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rectional officers at the Beto Academy in Region II in Palestine. The CMIT scholarship will allow him to begin advanced-degree studies this fall. "It does mean a lot to me to get a scholarship," said Wheat. "Although I had other opportunities, this is the route I wanted. I am a traditionalist. I wanted to go to Sam Houston because the offenders built the building and Dr. George J. Beto was one of its founders. He created the Windham School District. There is a close relationship between the College and TDCJ. There is a lot of history here."

After leaving the U.S. Marine Corps, Wheat began working at the Robertson Unit, a maximum security facility. He was promoted

to unit Safe Prisons Program coordinator and later assigned to the Region II Training Academy where he teaches specialty training courses, including munitions, firearm and defensive tactics for officers, and correctional awareness for noncustodial staff.

"It's a challenge," said Wheat. "The training we use, from my perspective, keeps us on the straight and narrow. If you want to change things systematically, the most effective way to do that is through training. We have a responsibility to the public for what we do. The success of the job we do will be obvious when these offenders return to society and become a part of our neighborhoods and communities." ●